

NMMU SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS 2014

03 to 21 February

WORKSHOP 3

PROF. ARCH. STEPHEN READ

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PORT ELIZABETH: GOING FORWARD

URBANIZATION AS CONCEPT, PROCESS AND REGULATOR OF DEVELOPMENT

THIS STUDIO WILL ATTEMPT TO ENGAGE THE WHOLE CITY — WHICH TODAY MEANS WORLD, REGION AND URBAN CENTRES AS WELL AS DISTRICTS, NEIGHBORHOODS AND STREETS. IT IS NOT ABOUT URBAN DESIGN AS THIS IS ORDINARILY DEFINED — AS A REMEDIATION OF STREETSCAPES AND FRONTAGES AND PUBLIC STREETS AND SQUARES. WHAT WE WILL DO INSTEAD IS DESCRIBE THE CITY IN A SYSTEMATIC WAY, AS A PRODUCT OF URBANIZATION, AND THEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN THE PROCESSES, SIMULTANEITIES AND INTERDEPENDENCIES OF THE WHOLE IN ORDER TO PRODUCE RESULTS AT THE LEVELS OF THE PARTS AND VICE VERSA. CITIES CAN BE DESCRIBED IN MULTIPLE WAYS. IT IS IN FACT NECESSARY TO DESCRIBE THEM IN MULTIPLE WAYS IF WE WISH TO ENGAGE WITH SOME OF THE OPPOSITIONS THAT CHARACTERIZE URBAN FABRIC AND URBAN LIFE. WE WANT TO BEGIN WITH A METHOD IN WHICH OPPOSITIONS REFLECTED IN THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS, LOCAL CENTRES AND NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS, CAN BE ACCOUNTED FOR. BUT HOW TO ENGAGE WITH OPPOSITIONS IN A SYSTEMATIC, CLEAR AND UNIFIED WAY; IN A WAY WE CAN DEAL WITH IN A PROCESS OF DESIGN? AND HOW CAN WE ENGAGE WITH THESE OPPOSITIONS IN AN OPEN AND FORWARD-LOOKING WAY; IN A WAY WE CAN TAKE WHAT EXISTS IN THE PRESENT AND DIRECT IT TO GROW TO A DESIRED OUTCOME IN THE FUTURE? AND WITH ENOUGH OPENNESS AND RESILIENCE THAT IT CAN ACCOMMODATE CHANGE ALONG THE WAY? THE METHOD PRESENTED STARTS WITH THE NOTION OF URBANIZATION. URBANIZATION IS A LAYERED PROCESS OF FORMATION OF URBAN COMMUNITIES, POLITIES, ECONOMIES AND SPACES. URBANIZATION IS NOT A SINGLE PROCESS. BUT IT IS NOT MASSIVELY MULTIPLE EITHER. IT PROCEEDS ON A NUMBER OF FRONTS SIMULTANEOUSLY. A CITY AND URBAN REGION IS BEING URBANIZED AT THE SAME TIME SUB-CENTRES ARE BEING URBANIZED AND NEIGHBORHOODS AND STREETS ARE BEING URBANIZED. THESE DIFFERENT URBANIZATIONS ARE LINKED IN TIME AND ARE DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER SO THAT WE CANNOT THINK OF ONE OF THESE PROCESSES WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE OTHERS. WE WILL USE THIS CONCEPTUAL AND PROCESS UNDERSTANDING TO BUILD A CLEAR MODEL OF THE CITY AND URBAN REGION OF PORT ELIZABETH. WE WILL THEN USE THIS MODEL TO GUIDE US IN UNDERSTANDING AN URBAN FUTURE THAT IS EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE. THIS UNDERSTANDING WILL BE PRESENTED AS A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF PORT ELIZABETH, AND MODEL AND VISION WILL THEN GUIDE DETAILED PROJECTS WHICH STRATEGICALLY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS MOVING PORT ELIZABETH FORWARD TO THE FUTURE. THE WORKSHOP IS INTENDED TO BE AN EDUCATION AS WELL AS A PROJECT. DISCUSSIONS, TALKS AND SEMINARS WILL BE INTERSPERSED WITH STUDIO WORK AND THE WHOLE PROJECT, RESEARCH, VISION AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS WILL BE A STUDIO AND TEAM EFFORT (WITH DOSES OF INDIVIDUAL WORK OF COURSE) INVOLVING STAFF AND STUDENTS. BESIDES A VISION FOR PE, THE MAIN THING WE WANT TO LEAVE STUDENTS WITH A MUCH CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT CITIES ARE, AND WHAT THEIR CITY IS, AND OF THE POTENTIALS AVAILABLE FOR CREATING JUST AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN FUTURES THROUGH AN EXTENDED RESEARCH AND DESIGN PROCESS.